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The Ballance of Power :

O R, A

C O M P A R I S O N

O F

The Strength of the *Emperor*
and the *French King*.

In a Letter to a Friend.

Nec unquam satis fida Potentia, ubi nimia est.
Tacit.

L O N D O N ;

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*The Ballance of Power, or a
Comparison of the Strength of
the Emperor and the French
King.*

S I R,

IF a First Minister were to conduct himself by the Advice of *Sm—t* and *T—l—d* in matters of Religion, *D—F—* and *D—t* of Trade, some Gentlemen I have in my Thoughts of Publick Credit, and others I could name of Politicks; no Man could with any reason complain of the Administration being founded upon too narrow a bottom.

But tho I have as just a Deference as I ought for the Judgment of those able Counsellors; yet if in their respective Provinces, every one of them should advise the giving *Spain* and the *West Indies* to the Duke of *Arjou* by a Peace, and dissuade the recovering those Kingdoms by a War for the Emperor, it would not be possible for me to be of their Opinion.

If *Spain* should be given to the Duke of *Anjou*, I should not believe, for the Reasons in the *Letter to a Member of the October-Club*, that either our Church, or Trade, or Credit, or State could be secur'd; as, on the contrary, I should believe they would be all out of Danger, if, with his own Hereditary Dominions, the Emperor should be possess'd of the whole *Spanish* Monarchy: And for this I shall give my Reasons in this Letter.

The whole Subject of all our newest Declamations is the Ballance of Power, and the formidable Greatness of the Emperor: tho he has now, for almost a year, succeeded to all the Hereditary Countries of his Brother, we never heard till very lately that he was too dangerous to be trusted with more Dominions. This looks very much as if all other Means had fail'd, and therefore this Doctrine is just now started: the People are to be taught that a Ballance of Power is necessary; in order to its being destroy'd, they are to be persuaded, by the fear of imaginary Dangers, to embrace their certain Ruin.

I shall therefore, in a few words, explain this Ballance of Power: When this is done, I believe we shall have no very great Reasons to apprehend any Danger from the Emperor.

The Power of a Prince may then be said to be ballanc'd, when the Strength and Union of his Neighbours are sufficient to prevent

vent the farther Increase of his Dominions: and when either this Strength or Union shall once fail, he may go on without Interruption; and as soon as he shall have devour'd one Province, he will presently have a better Appetite to another; for a Stomach is seldom pall'd by such Meals.

If the Strength is not equal, the whole Dispute is at end; but the want of Union will prove the same thing. And therefore three several States, every one of which is equivalent to a third part of the strength of a Neighbour Prince, in all human reason can never be able to give him much Interruption, since the Union of three independent Powers was hardly ever known to be so great, as of one alone. And if only one of three should lie quiet, the other two would be an easy Prey. So that the Rule of Geometry, that Wholes with equal Parts are all equal, would certainly fail in Politics; since a Confederacy with three equal Parts to those of a single State, would not be equal to the whole for want of Union.

There are many Reasons why the Union betwixt them must needs fail. If there should be at the Head of one of the independent States a Prince of little Wisdom, under the Influence of evil Counsellors, that would have less regard to their Master's Interest than their own, that would think to find their own Account even in the Ruin of their Country:

Country : Such a Prince is likely to be deluded by their Artifices, to sit still while his Neighbours are destroy'd. He that thinks otherwise, is desir'd to tell whether *Charles II.* of *England* was not too much under the Influence of crafty Ministers, and She-Favourites ; or else by what quieting Draughts he was laid asleep, while *Lewis XIV.* was making his Conquests upon *Spain*, *Germany*, and the *Netherlands*. 'Tis plain, that *France* alone was superior to all those Powers ; and yet by the Weakness of the Prince, or the Corruption of the Courtiers, *England* never came into their Assistance. In this Instance, and by such Means, one of those States, which could only help to make the Ballance of Power, was then kept to her Neutrality ; and *France* was suffer'd to rise so high, as has since cost us above a hundred Millions to take her down.

But if a Prince were as wise as *Solomon*, yet if he has not the whole Power in himself, if he must depend upon the States of his Country for his whole Supplies, the Case may be the same. We had a sad Instance of this in the late King, whose Supplies were very often to be rais'd, when the Season for Action was far advanc'd. And every Gentleman, who thinks this the best Parliament that ever was, must believe we have had some that were not so good. And what has been our own Case, may happen to be so again ;

gain; unless it shall be said that the Electors are the wisest, the most constant, the most disinterested People in the World. This is another Instance that may happen to destroy the Union, which is so necessary to this Ballance of Power. A King of *England* can never be sure of adding any weight to an Alliance, till he can be first assur'd that his Parliament shall be of his own Opinion.

And tho the Rulers of a Country, which helps to make this Ballance, were Persons of the greatest Wisdom, and the most absolute Power, yet they may sometimes be forc'd, by the general Bent and Inclination of their People, into a Peace, when War would be more for their Interest. The States General have sometimes yielded to accept an unsafe Peace, thro the mere Impatience of their Subjects: So that when their Allies have sometimes call'd for their briskest Resolutions, they have answer'd very smartly, *Que pretendez vous donc, Messieurs, de fair nous deschirer par la Canaille?* What do you pretend then, Sirs, to make us be torn in pieces by the Rabble? We have an Instance of this in the Memoirs of Sir *William Temple*. It was this general Inclination of their People that forc'd the States upon the separate Peace of *Nimeguen*, against the Inclination of their Allies: And if this at any time should be the Case, the Union must be broken, and the Ballance would be destroy'd.

And so it would often be by the Remoteness of any one of the ballancing States from present Danger. If three or more Princes are not able to ballance the Power of a Potentate but by the greatest Union, and with their whole Forces, it must be extreme Folly in any one to shorten his Quota, because the others are nearest to the Danger. All the Consequence of this is, *Dum singuli pugnant, universi vincuntur*; If they resolve to fight only in their Turns, in their Turns they are sure to be destroy'd. The Prince, at the greatest distance from Danger, ought in reason to expect no other favour than that of *Ulysses* from *Polyphemus*, to be devour'd the last of his Companions. And yet nothing is more common, than that a little distance from Danger begets a great deal of Security; as we see in all the Wars between *France* and the Empire: tho the latter, with exerting her whole Power, would not be a Match for the former; yet only the Circles of *Suabia*, *Franconia*, and the *Rhine*, shall engage with their whole Forces, and the remoter Princes hardly furnish their bare Quota's; when, on the other hand, in *France*, which is under the absolute Dominion of one Man, every the remotest Subject from the Danger, is oblig'd to contribute with his whole Power to the War.

Besides the Causes I have mention'd, Revenge, Anger, and other Passions to which

which Princes are as much subject as private Persons, shall often fall in to break that Union, which is so necessary betwixt independent States for their common Support, and for preserving the Ballance of Power. And therefore if we were to yield up *Spain* to the Duke of *Anjou*, and should presently after find our selves oppress'd in all the Branches of our Trade, as is demonstrated by the *Letter to the October-Club*, to whom should we fly for Relief? To the Emperor? Is it not natural for him to answer, that since we would not fight for his Dominions, he shall not concern himself for our Trade?

If we have no other way to defend our selves against the Power of the greatest Potentate, than by the firmest Union, and the whole Forces of three or more independent States, the Lord have Mercy upon us! Such an Union, for the Reasons I have given, seems hardly practicable. Our present grand Alliance is thought almost a Miracle, and is not to be depended on as a Precedent for our future Confidence. And even at this time there are Complaints that some of the Allies are not so very hearty, and that they will not be brought to furnish their whole Quota's; whilst we live in perpetual Alarms of Practices upon one State or another to break off from the Grand Alliance. A Confederacy therefore of several States is not sufficient to ballance the Power of a single Potentate.

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This can be done only by a Neighbour Prince, of equal, or not much inferiour Power. So long as there shall be an Equality, or not much Difference, betwixt two the greatest Potentates ; a lesser State, such as *England* or *Holland*, will be always able, without any other Assistance, to throw the Ballance on either side, and oblige both the Parties to be contented with their own ; so that in such an Equality only consists the whole Ballance of Power.

Let us see then, if we can discover, which of the two would be the most powerful Monarch, the *French* King with the Duke of *Anjou* upon the *Spanish* Throne, or the Emperor with all his own Hereditary Countries and the whole *Spanish* Monarchy. The Decision of this Matter would put an end to our present Controversy.

France in every Year of her Wars, from the Peace of the *Pyrennees* to that of *Reswyck*, has maintain'd in Garison and in the Field at least Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Horse and Foot ; and, as often as she pleas'd, has been able to equip a Naval Power, sufficient to contend with either the *Dutch* or the *English* Fleets, tho not with both together. By her annual supplies of Mony from her foreign Trade, she was always able to subsist the greatest part of her Armies in the Enemies Countries, or upon the Frontiers of her own. This then must be esteem'd the
Power

Power of *France* alone, Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Land Forces, and a Naval Power equal either to a *Dutch* or an *English* Fleet.

I think it plainly appears, by the *Letter to the October-Club*, that the Consequence of yielding *Spain* to the Duke of *Anjou* by a Peace, would be the making the *French* King Master of *Spain* and *Portugal*, of all the *Spanish* and *Portuguese* *Indies*, and of all the Treasures of those Countries. The Expedient to prevent it, by delivering into our hands *Cadiz* and *Gibraltar*, *Port Mahone* and *Portobel*, and I know not what Forts in the *South-Sea*, would only burden us with a Charge to no purpose. All the Bullion of *America* would, for the Reasons in that Letter, find its last Settlement in *France*. I believe every Man will imagine, that the Gold and Silver imported annually from the *Indies*, are of the Value of Ten Millions. I am fully persuaded, that every Prince is able to raise twice as much upon his Subjects, as shall be annually gain'd by their foreign Trade ; since the greatest part of the Sums, which shall be rais'd in this manner, will be expended in his own Countries. Ten Years Peace, and such a Revenue, would discharge all the Debts of that Crown. And whenever *France* shall please to renew her Wars, a Revenue of Twenty Millions will furnish out a Power both at Land and Sea, which all
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the rest of *Europe* will never be able to look in the Face, especially of *Europe* growing so much poorer in proportion as *France* shall increase in Riches. I think there can be no manner of question, but the Power of *France* would be at least doubled.

This then was the Power of *France* alone, viz. Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Horse and Foot, and a Fleet equal to that of *England* or *Holland*, till the time of our late happy Revolution: her Successes in all her Wars since the *Pyrenean* Treaty, till we came in to have our Part in the Quarrel, were every where undisputed, against *Spain*, *Germany*, and the *Netherlands*: And by these Successes she was rais'd at last so high, that it has been the Work of Twenty Years, and of almost all *Europe*, to take her down. The whole Power of the House of *Austria*, in both the *Spanish* and *German* Branches of that Family, had been engag'd against her, with large Assistance from the Circles of the Empire, and the whole Fleets and Armies of the *United Provinces*: Yet all these Potentates were not able to withstand the Efforts of that single Kingdom. Her Power was still superior to that Alliance; and if a Deduction had been made of the Forces of the Circles, and of the *United Provinces*, it is visible the whole Strength of the House of *Austria* had not been equal to three Fifths of the Land Forces of the *French* King, nor indeed to one half of his whole Power. What

What Alteration then would be made by the Union of all the *Austrian* Dominions under the Person of the Emperor? Only this, that the whole Strength of those Countries, which were exerted against *France* before, are sure to be united against her for ever. But the Emperor by this Union will not be able to make himself Master of *Portugal*, since *France* with a superior Power will be always ready to oppose any Attempts of that nature. Nor will the Emperor be able to possess himself of the Riches of *Peru* and *Mexico*, since his *Spanish* Subjects cannot furnish those Colonies with such Manufactures as are wanted there, nor can the rest of the Imperial Dominions furnish *Spain*. *Peru* and *Mexico* in this Case must have the Goods of *England*, *France* and *Holland*; and therefore *England*, *France* and *Holland* will come in for their Shares of that Mony. So that by this Union, the Riches of the *Austrian* Countries are not likely to be increas'd, nor consequently their whole Power.

But if, for Argument's sake, it shall be yielded, that by 'this Union under one and the same Head, there would be made to the *Austrian* Dominions an addition of new Strength, equivalent to one third part of their old: And if it shall also be contended, that *France*, by the Calamities of her late Wars, has suffer'd the Diminution of one third part of her whole Power; these two
Potentates

Potentates would be but equal. Where then would be this exorbitant Grandure of the Emperor? How could the Ballance of Power be said to be destroy'd? What is there that we ought to desire so much as an Equality of those Princes? Would not then either *England* or *Holland*, or even an inferior State, be able at all times to cast the Ballance on either side, keep those Princes to their good Behaviour, and preserve the Peace of *Europe*?

If any one thinks I have not fairly cast up this Account, I should desire him to falsify it in any Part, and rectify my Mistakes. He ought to shew wherein I have fallen short in the Power of the Emperor, and exceeded in that of *France*, the only proper way of bringing this Matter to an Issue.

But if instead of rectifying my Mistakes, any Writer should endeavour to throw Dust in my Eyes; if instead of an Answer, he should only offer a Heap of comparative and superlative Words, without any certain Sense or Meaning; if he should enumerate the several Titles of the Emperor, without shewing the Importance of his Dominions; if he should go about to shew the antient Strength of the House of *Austria*, or the antient Weakness of *France*, without comparing them with their present Condition: If he should tell me, that King *William* was for a Treaty of Partition, without shewing that he was forc'd to it by the ill Disposition of his

his People for a New War, and that even then that Prince was not for leaving *Spain* with the House of *Bourbon*: Lastly, if he should tell me of the Ballance of Power, without bringing either of the Princes to the Scales, I shall e'en be contented with any of these Answers, because no better is to be expected. And I do beforehand assure the Author of any such Answer, that I shall acquit him of the Reproach of being a mercenary Writer, since I cannot believe that any Gentleman in his Senses would bestow Wages upon such a Scribler.

Nov. 10. 1711.

I am, &c.

F I N I S.

In a few Days will be Publish'd,

A Letter to a Member of the *October-Club*; shewing, That to yield *Spain* to the Duke of *Anjou* by a Peace, would be the Ruin of *Great Britain*. Particularly demonstrating these unhappy Consequences. 1. That we should lose a Revenue of three Millions and a half now coming in by foreign Trade. 2. That a Million of our People would be depriv'd of their Employments, and must come to the Lands for their Subsistence. 3. And that all the Lands of *Great Britain* would be reduc'd to one fourth Part of their present annual and total Value. 2d Edition Corrected.

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